2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

medieval town of gold or iron miners, whose mines were protected by a now-disappeared mud fortress. Traces of their town stretch for nearly a kilometer.[7] Badaga traditions do not mention this mining activity, and there is no basis for supposing Badagas initially occupied the hills as prospectors or mine-slaves. If such old quarries (which might even be Roman) have any relevance at all to Badaga history, it can only be because the Ummattu:r chieftains may have turned their eyes towards the Nilgiris in search of the gold that it was rumoured could be found there. In recent times there has been no gold mining in the district, except in the Wainad during the feverish speculation of 1879 1882. (Francis, 1908, 16-19; for other references, see Hockings, 1975, 49-50; 1978, 43-47).

While archaeology is of no assistance, kinship provides a rough guide to the antiquity of the Badaga community. The Gauda headman of Tu:ne:ri, paramount chief of the Badagas, can name nineteen generations of forefathers. His was probably the first village founded (Francis, 1908, 364), and as seventeen of the headmen were resident there the antiquity of Tu:ne:ri must go back to the early seventeenth century if we allow twenty years per generation.[8]

Another line of argument is that all Hindu Badagas are Shaivites (including those who are Virashaivas), whereas in southern Mysore there is now a large minority of Vaishnavites. That sect had its inception there with the conversion of the Mysore kings to Vaishnavism around 1610, which suggests that the Badagas were already in the Nilgiris by that date and so not affected in the way that lowland communities were (Grigg, 1880, 218; Macleane, 1893, 64; Wilks, 1930, vol. I, 52). That some if not all were indeed in the hills was confirmed by Finicio (1603).[9]

It has been argued that the respect shown to Badagas by the Todas and Kotas, for example in customary salutations, indicates that they had entered the Nilgiris while the Mysore kings were still in the ascendancy and had some territorial claims over the Nilgiris (Grigg, 1880, 218; see below, 112). The Be:da phratry, who arrived rather more recently as huntsmen and tax collectors in the retinue of the chieftain of Ummattu:r, 'still call the Mysore chiefs... their Kartas or lords' (Grigg, 1880, 268-269, quoting Metz, 1864). Such an argument does not accord with the widespread tale of flight from Moslem oppressors, which depicts some Badagas initially coming to the Nilgiri tribes with caps in hand: